



U.S. Department of Agriculture Personnel Security Bulletin #10-02

Subject: Mandatory Use of Reciprocity and PIPS Access

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Agriculture

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Subject: All offices that process background investigation requests must ensure that a prior investigation does not meet the standards of reciprocity prior to initiating a new investigation request to eliminate unnecessary actions, improve timeliness, and reduce spending.

Date Issued: January 5, 2010

Effective Date: January 5, 2010

Scope and Effect: This is an internal advisory document for use by USDA personnel involved in implementing USDA's personnel security program.

Supersession: None.

Background: On January 16, 2009, the President signed Executive Order 13488, *Granting Reciprocity on Excepted Service and Federal Contractor Employee Fitness and Reinvestigating Individuals in Positions of Public Trust*. This order mandates reciprocal recognition by Federal agencies on prior suitability determinations. On September 24, 2009, OPM released a memorandum titled "Guidance for Implementing E.O. 13488."

The Order allows a gaining agency to deny reciprocal recognition of a prior favorable fitness or suitability determination when:

- (1) The new position requires a higher level of investigation than previously conducted for that individual;
- (2) An agency obtains new information that calls into question the individual's fitness based on character or conduct; or
- (3) The individual's investigative record shows conduct that is incompatible with the core duties of the new position.

On December 12, 2005, the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) released a memorandum titled "Reciprocal Recognition of Existing Personnel Security Clearances" to ensure that background investigations are conducted to

grant new security clearances only when they are actually required. This memorandum was updated on July 17, 2006.

New Procedure:

Effective immediately, agencies shall request from PDSD reciprocal recognition for positions of public trust when the prior favorable suitability determination was based on a current (within 5 years) investigation at the proper level as required by the individual's current position designation and when the individual has had no break in employment since the favorable determination was made.

OPM has proposed that a person occupying a public trust position be reinvestigated at least once **every five years** and in anticipation of this change, USDA is implementing this standard until further notice. Reciprocity cannot be granted on a Public Trust position when the prior investigation was completed over five years ago. NOTE: This rule does not apply to Low Risk positions.

Effective immediately, agencies shall request from PDSD reciprocal recognition for positions of national security when the prior favorable determination was based on a current (within 5 years for Critical Sensitive; within 10 years for Non-Critical Sensitive) investigation at the proper level as required by the individual's current position designation and when the individual has not been retired or otherwise separated from United States Government employment for not more than 2 years.

To aid federal Human Resource (HR) officers and federal Personnel Security points-of-contact in verifying prior investigations that were favorably adjudicated to utilize reciprocity for all types of investigations, PDSD will process access requests to OPM's **Personnel Investigations Processing System (PIPS)**. PIPS maintains the Security/Suitability Investigations Index (SII), a repository of background investigations on federal employees and contractors. PIPS is accessed through OPM's online Secure Portal.

For access to PIPS, please contact Arviet Thorpe at Arviet.thorpe@usda.gov or (202) 720-4390.

Further Information: To read E.O. 13488 in its entirety, see <http://edocket.access.gpo.gov/2009/pdf/E9-1574.pdf>.

To read the memorandum from OPM in its entirety, see <http://www.chcoc.gov/Transmittals/TransmittalDetails.aspx?TransmittalId=2518>.

To read the OPM proposed rule on reinvestigation requirements for public trust positions, see <http://edocket.access.gpo.gov/2009/E9-26448.htm>.

To read the 2005 OMB memorandum in its entirety, see <http://www.archives.gov/isoo/pdf/omb-reciprocity-memo.pdf>.

To read the 2005 OMB memorandum in its entirety, see <http://www.archives.gov/isoo/pdf/update-omb-reciprocity-memo.pdf>.

For further information, please contact John Loveless at (202) 720-7373.
